

## The Great War

- I. Long-term causes of World War I
  - A. Rival alliances: **Triple Alliance** vs. **Triple Entente**
    1. 1870: Balance of power of Europe upset by decisive Prussian victory in Franco-Prussian War.
      - a. Bismarck feared French revenge and negotiated treaties to isolate France
      - b. Bismarck also feared Russia, especially after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when Russia blamed Germany for not gaining territory in the Balkans
    2. 1879, Dual Alliance: Germany and Austria
      - a. Bismarck sought to thwart Russian expansion
      - b. Dual Alliance based on German support for Austrian in its struggle with Russia over expansion in the Balkans
      - c. Became a major feature of European diplomacy until the end of World War I.
    3. **Triple Alliance, 1881: Italy joined Germany and Austria**
      - Italy sought support for its imperialistic ambitions in the Mediterranean and Africa.
    4. **Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty** of 1887
      - a. Promised neutrality of both Germany and Russia if either country went to war with another country.
      - b. Kaiser Wilhelm II refused to renew reinsurance treaty after removing Bismarck in 1890
        - This can be seen as a huge diplomatic blunder; Russia wanted to renew it
        - Germany, now out of necessity, developed closer ties to Austria
        - France courted Russia and the two became allies
    5. **"Splendid Isolation"** for Britain: After 1891, Britain was the only non-aligned power
    6. **Anglo-Japanese Alliance** (1902): Britain sought Japanese agreement to "benevolent neutrality" to counter possible Russian threat in India.
      - End of Britain's "splendid isolation"
    7. **Entente Cordial (1904)**: In the face of **Anglo-German naval arms race**, Britain and France settled all outstanding colonial disputes in Africa.
      - a. France accepted British rule of the Sudan
      - b. Britain recognized French control of Morocco

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8. **Triple Entente, 1907: Britain, France and Russia**
  - a. Formed to check the power of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, Italy)
  - b. Not truly a formal alliance but one done in principle

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B. The **Anglo-German arms race**

1. Militarism led to a belief in the inevitability of a general European war.
  - a. Germany overtook Britain industrially in the 1890s
  - b. **Bertha von Suttner** (Austrian)
    - First woman to win Nobel Peace Prize; opposed the arms race
    - *Lay Down Your Arms* (1889) contributed to founding of Peace Societies in Austria & Germany
2. British policy was to have its fleet larger than the combined fleets of any two rival nations
3. 1898, Kaiser Wilhelm II began expansion of German navy to protect a growing international trade and colonialism
  - a. Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz led the naval buildup for Germany.
  - b. Haldane Mission (1912): British tried unsuccessfully to end naval arms race with Germany
4. By World War I, both Britain and Germany possessed **Dreadnoughts**—new super battleships with awesome firing range and power

C. Imperialism led to increased tensions between the Great Powers over Africa

1. Berlin Conference, 1885: Germany's late entry into imperialism led Bismarck to establish rules for carving up Africa
  - Germany aggressively set out to acquire colonies, sometimes coming into conflict with rival European powers
2. **Kruger Telegram** (1902): triggered British anger at Germany when the Kaiser congratulated the Boers on their victories over British troops in South Africa.
3. 1906: **Algeciras Conference** settled the First Moroccan Crisis
  - a. Kaiser had urged Moroccan independence despite its being a French colony
  - b. Britain and Italy supported French dominance in Morocco and Tunisia

- c. Britain, France, Russia, & U.S. saw Germany as potential threat to dominate all Europe
- d. Germany became further isolated (except for Austria's support)
- e. Germany decried "**encirclement**" by other powers to block Germany's emergence as world power
- f. The Triple Entente was created in response
- 4. **Second Moroccan Crisis** (1911)
  - a. German gunboat sent to Morocco to protest French occupation of the city of Fez.
  - b. Britain once again supported France
  - c. Some observers believed this conflict would escalate into a world war.
  - d. Germany backed down for minor concessions in equatorial Africa.
- D. Nationalism created a "powder keg" in the Balkans
  - 1. The Ottoman Empire ("**the sick man of Europe**") receded from the Balkans leaving a power vacuum
    - This was the so-called Eastern Question.
  - 2. **Pan-Slavism**, a nationalist movement to unite all Slavic peoples, encouraged the Serbs, Bosnians, Slovenes, and Croats to seek a single political entity in Southern Europe
    - As the southern Slavs' "big brother" to the east, Russia focused on Balkan territories in the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires after its humiliating loss in the Russo-Japanese War.
  - 3. First Balkan Crisis (Bosnian Crisis)
    - a. The **Young Turks** led by Atatürk (Mustafa Kemal Pasha) set up a parliamentary gov't in the Ottoman Empire
      - Though somewhat politically progressive in its attempt to modernize the empire, the regime seemed weak to the other European powers
      - 1911-12, Italy took Turkish province of Libya showing how weak the Ottomans had become
    - b. 1908, Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina while Russia failed to gain access, thus leaving Serbia frustrated
      - Austria's action violated the Congress of Berlin (1878)
    - c. War was averted because Russia was not yet ready and France was not willing to fight over the Balkans

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4. **First Balkan War (1912)**
  - a. Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria allied to successfully drive the Turks out of the Balkans
    - The fighting lasted less than one month
    - Most of the formerly-Ottoman Balkan territories were now divided up among the Balkan states
  - b. Serbia sought port access to the Adriatic Sea but was rebuffed when Austria created the state of Albania to block Serbia.
5. **Second Balkan War (1913)**
  - a. Bulgaria was angered that Serbia and Greece had acquired significant territory in Macedonia and thus attacked both countries.
  - b. Serbia defeated Bulgaria in its quest for Macedonia and temporarily gained Albania as a result
    - Russia backed its Slavic neighbor, Serbia
  - c. Austria, with German support against Russia, prevented Serbia from holding onto Albania
  - d. Serbia was frustrated as it still had no access to the Adriatic Sea; Albania gained independence.
  - e. Russia was humiliated since it could not help Serbia acquire Albania
6. "Third Balkan War" between Austria and Serbia became World War I in the summer of 1914

## II. Immediate causes of World War I

- A. June 28, 1914: **Archduke Franz Ferdinand**, Austrian heir to throne, was assassinated by Serbian nationalist **Princip** (member of the ultra-nationalist Serbian "**Black Hand**") while visiting Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- B. **Kaiser Wilhelm II** pledged unwavering support to Austria to punish Serbia: "the blank check"
  1. Austria made harsh demands on Serbia by requiring Serbia to punish all forms of anti-Austrian sentiment and participate in joint judicial proceedings against anti-Austrian activity.
  2. Eventually Serbia agreed to most of Austria's terms except judicial proceedings which it wanted adjudicated by the International Tribunal at the Hague.

C. July 28, Austria declared war on Serbia

1. Claimed Serbia had not accommodated adequately Austria's demands.
2. July 29, Austria began bombarding Belgrade (the capital of Serbia)
  - This represented the first military aggression of the war.
3. In response, Russia mobilized its armies against Austria & Germany
4. France, in response, mobilized on Germany's western border

D. Aug 1, Germany declared war on France

1. Aug. 3, Germany invaded Belgium (on its way through to France)
  - In effect, Germany turned the little localized war in the Balkans into a world war by attacking Belgium and France.
2. In response, France declared war on Germany
3. Aug 4, Britain declared war on Germany

E. Two opposing alliances

1. **Central Powers** (Triple Alliance): Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire (also Bulgaria)
2. **Allies** (Triple Entente): Britain, France, Russia (later, Japan, Italy and U.S.)

III. The **Western Front**

A. **Schlieffen Plan**

1. German military plan to invade France through Belgium, defeat France quickly (6 weeks) by sweeping around Paris, and then redeploy to the east to defeat Russia
2. **Battle of the Marne** (Sept. 1914): After Germans came within sight of Paris, French and British forces pushed the German forces back
  - a. French army led by General Joseph Joffre
  - b. The battle represented the end of mobility on the Western Front
3. Why did the Schlieffen Plan fail?
  - a. Belgians' surprising resistance to Germany's invasion slowed down the German offensive into France.
  - b. The left of the German line failed to lure the French army into Alsace and Lorraine and destroy it.

- c. The Russians mobilized quickly in the east requiring German divisions to be sent there instead
  - d. French (and British) counterattack at the Battle of the Marne was decisive in halting the German invasion.
- B. Trench warfare resulted in a stalemate and lasted four bloody years
  - 1. A long line of trenches stretched from the North Sea to the Swiss border in the south.
  - 2. Despite massive casualties on both sides, few gains were made in terms of gaining ground
  - 3. 1916: Massive casualties but neither side could break through
    - a. **Battle of Verdun** (began in February)
      - Germany sought a battle of attrition that would “bleed France white” and force it to sue for peace
      - France lost 540,000 men; Germany lost 430,000
      - General Philippe Pétain’s leadership of French forces made him a national hero.
    - b. **Battle of the Somme** (began in July)
      - British and French offensive to break through the German lines
      - Losses of men: Britain 420,000; France 200,000; Germany 650,000
  - 4. **Erich Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*** (1929) later illustrated the horrors trench warfare.
- C. Technological advancements in war increased casualties
  - 1. World War I represented the industrial revolution applied to warfare
  - 2. **Machine gun**
    - a. Perhaps most important reason for the frightful casualties that occurred compared to previous wars
    - b. First used effectively by the Germans in mowing down French and British offensives in trench warfare.
    - c. Later employed by both sides
  - 3. **Tanks**
    - a. Artillery was now made mobile (in contrast to cannon used in previous wars)
    - b. Tanks could navigate treacherous terrain.

4. **Airplane**

- a. Initial air fights consisted of pistols and rifles fired from planes
- b. Germany developed the first fighter plane (the Fokker) that synchronized machine guns and propellers.
  - In response, Britain and France developed their own fighter squadrons
- c. Britain used planes to bomb Zeppelin bases in Germany

5. **Poison gas**

- a. Used by the Germans early in the war
- b. Impact of mustard gas was largely negated by the use of gas masks by the Allies

6. **U-boats**

- a. Submarines, initially used by Germany, had devastating effects on Allied shipping throughout the war.
  - Britain and Russia also had submarines
- b. German use of U-boats was the most important reason for why the U.S. eventually entered the war.

7. **Zeppelins** (blimps) used by Germany to bomb London and other civilian targets

- Eventually, exploding shells were able to destroy Zeppelins in the air.

8. **Radio**

- a. Wireless technology made communication more effective in the battlefield.
- b. The Germans took advantage Russia's lack of radio capability and tapped into Russian phone lines to discover Russian battle plans.

IV. Other major theaters of the war

A. **Eastern Front**

1. **General Von Hindenburg & General Von**

**Ludendorff** defeated invading Russian armies at Tannenburg

- Turned the tide of the war in the east

2. The Russians were poorly organized and suffered horrific casualties at the hands of the Germans

3. **Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (Dec. 1917): Vladimir Lenin, after the Bolshevik Revolution, took Russia out of the war but was forced to give Germans 1/4 of Russian territory**

**B. Gallipoli Campaign (1915)**

1. British and Australian forces failed to take Dardanelles as a step toward taking Constantinople and defeating the Turks
2. 200,000 British troops killed or wounded

**C. Middle East**

1. **T.E. Lawrence** (Lawrence of Arabia): British officer who scored major victories in the middle east to weaken the Turks
2. The British gained support from Arab tribes who resented Ottoman domination of the region.

**D. British and Allied Naval Blockade**

1. Goal was to strangle Central Powers
2. Starting in 1914, used superior fleet & sea mines to cut Central Powers off from overseas trade and caused Germany to lose control of its colonial empire.
3. Germany responded by sinking Allied vessels
4. **Lusitania**, 1915: U-boats sank a British passenger liner killing 1,200 (including 128 Americans)
5. Germany in 1917 began **unrestricted submarine warfare**, sinking all ships with its **U-boats**
  - Most important reason for U.S. entry into the war
6. By war's end, the blockade succeeded in strangling Germany, resulting in thousands of German deaths due to starvation

**E. Allies "unknown war" against Russia: Archangel expedition (summer 1918)**

1. The Allies sought to prevent a Bolshevik victory during Russian civil war by invading Russia from Murmansk in the north.
2. Allies also sent troops into Siberia to prevent Japanese control of the region, rescue thousands of marooned Czech soldiers and prevent the Bolsheviks from getting new weapons supplies.
3. In effect, contributed to prolonging the Russian Civil War



- V. **"Total war"**: involved mass civilian populations in the war effort
- A. Massive conscription drafted most able-bodied men in their youth
  - B. In some cases, civilian populations became targets
    1. Early in the war, Germany used Zeppelins to bomb London
    2. The British blockade resulted in significant starvation in Germany
  - C. News was censored; propaganda lionized men at the front and dehumanized the enemy
    1. Intense nationalism demanded support from the entire population
    2. Some historians contend that Germany increased its belligerency in the 1890s in order to rally the masses behind the government and slow down the growth of the S.P.D.
      - a. In 1914, the S.P.D. (then the largest party in the Reichstag) agreed to support the war as part of the "civil peace" with the Kaiser—the *burgfrieden*.
      - b. The same may have also been true in Britain as the issue of Irish independence dominated the headlines.
    3. British propaganda effectively demonized Germany as the "Hun"
  - D. Economic production was focused on the war effort
    1. Free-market capitalism was abandoned in favor of strong central planning of the economy.
    2. Women replaced male factory workers who were now fighting the war.
      - a. Accounted for 43% of the labor force in Russia
      - b. Changing attitudes about women resulted in increased rights after the war (Britain, Germany, Austria and the U.S.)
    3. Labor unions supported the war effort.
      - Saw increased influence and prestige due to increased demand for labor
    4. Rationing of food and scarce commodities was instituted.
    5. Civilians financed the war by buying bonds.
  - E. Each side aimed at "starving out" the enemy by cutting off vital supplies to the civilian population.

- F. Increase in centralized control by warring regimes
    - 1. In France, **Georges Clemenceau** created a dictatorship during the war
    - 2. Germany became the world's first totalitarian regime in order to control the war effort
      - In large part, the impact of the British blockade resulted in an increasingly repressive gov't in Germany
    - 3. British economy was largely planned and regulated
  - G. War promoted greater social equality, thus blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor
- VI. Diplomacy during the war
- A. 1915: neutral Italy entered the war against the Central Powers (its former allies) with the promise of some Austrian and Balkan territory—**Italia Irredenta** ("unredeemed Italy")—and some German colonies and Turkish territories.
  - B. **Zimmerman Note**: Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico against the U.S.
    - Mexico would receive much of the southwestern U.S. if the Central Powers won.
  - C. **Balfour Note** (1917) Arabs & Jews in Palestine were promised autonomy if they joined the Allies.
    - 1. Britain declared sympathy for idea of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.
    - 2. New policy seemed to contradict British support for Arab nationalism.
  - D. **Wilson's 14 Points** (Jan. 1918)
    - 1. Plan to end the war along liberal, democratic lines
    - 2. Provisions:
      - a. Abolish secret treaties
      - b. Freedom of the seas
      - c. Remove economic barriers (e.g. tariffs)
      - d. Reduction of armament burdens
      - e. Promise of independence ("**self-determination**") to oppressed minority groups (e.g. Poles, Czechs), millions of which lived in Germany and Austria-Hungary.
      - f. Adjustment of colonial claims in interests of both native peoples and colonizers
      - g. German evacuation of Russia; restoration of Belgium; return of Alsace-Lorraine to France; evacuation and restoration of the Balkans; return

- of Schleswig to Denmark
- h. Adjustment of Italy's borders along ethnic lines.
- i. Autonomy for non-Turkish parts of the Turkish Empire.
- j. 14th point: International organization to supply collective security
  - Foreshadowed the League of Nations that was created after the war

## VII. End of the War

### A. **Meuse-Argonne offensive** (spring 1918)

1. Germans transferred divisions from the east (after defeating Russia) to the western front and mounted a massive offensive.
2. U.S. entered war in time to assist Britain and France in stopping the German offensive

### B. Central Powers sought peace based on 14 Points (believing they would get fair treatment)

1. Germany and Austria-Hungary were wracked with revolution
2. Austria surrendered on Nov. 3
3. Germany surrendered on Nov. 11
  - Wilhelm II forced to abdicate and fled to Holland

## VIII. **Paris Peace Conference, 1919**

### A. **Big Four:** Lloyd George (Br.), Clemenceau (Fr.), Wilson (US), Orlando (It)

1. Central powers were excluded from negotiations since France was concerned with its future security
2. Italy left the conference angry it would not get some territories it had been promised in 1915

### B. **Versailles Treaty, 1919**

1. **Mandates** created for former colonies and territories of the Central Powers
  - Much of the Middle East was now controlled by Britain and France
2. **Article 231:** placed sole blame for war on Germany; Germany would be severely punished
  - a. Germany was forced to pay huge reparations to Britain and France
  - b. German army and navy severely reduced
  - c. Rhineland was demilitarized; Saar coal mines taken over by France
  - d. Germany lost all its colonies

3. **League of Nations** created
  - a. Germany and Russia were not included
  - b. The U.S. Senate failed to ratify resulting in U.S. isolationism
  - c. The League thus was born as a mere shadow of what it had originally been intended to achieve

**C. Impact of World War I on European Society**

1. Massive casualties: 10 million soldiers dead; 10 million civilians dead, many from influenza epidemic; 15 million died in the Russian Revolution
  - Thus, the birthrate fell significantly after the war (though illegitimate births increased)
2. War promoted greater social equality, thus blurring class distinctions and lessening the gap between rich and poor
  - a. The Russian Revolution abolished the nobility and gave women more rights than any other country in Europe.
  - b. Women received the right to vote in Britain the same year that the war ended; Germany soon followed.
  - c. The nobility in Germany, Austria and Russia lost much of its influence and prestige.
  - d. During the war, women took over the jobs of men who were fighting the war (but were paid lower wages)
3. Dissent increased as the war continued
  - a. Czar was overthrown by the Provisional gov't, who was then overthrown by the Bolsheviks due to mounting war casualties
  - b. Irish Republicans staged an insurrection—the **Easter Rebellion**—in England in 1916.
  - c. In Germany, militant socialists and anti-war activists Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin were imprisoned for trying to convince fellow socialists not to support the war effort.
  - d. Large crowds of women in France, Austria and Italy protested working conditions or high prices.
  - e. Government censorship existed in virtually every country and people increasingly grew dissatisfied with the integrity of their governments.

4. End to long-standing royal dynasties
  - a. Hapsburg dynasty removed in Austria (had lasted 500 years)
  - b. Romanov dynasty removed in Russia (had lasted 300 years)
  - c. Hohenzollern dynasty removed in Germany (had lasted 300 years)
  - d. Ottoman Empire destroyed (had lasted 500 years)
5. Political map of Europe was redrawn
  - a. Creation of **Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania,** and **Yugoslavia**
    - **Albania** regained sovereignty
  - b. Germany split in two by Polish corridor (East Prussia separated from rest of Germany)
6. The Russian Revolution resulted in world's first communist country
7. German nationalist resentment of harsh Versailles Treaty doomed the new Weimar Republic in Germany
  - German anger with treaty partially responsible for rise of Hitler in early 1930s
8. Shift in financial power to the United States
  - a. Europe lost its preeminent position economically that it had enjoyed for 500 years
  - b. The U.S. became the world's leading creditor and greatest producer due to the drain of Europe's resources.
9. Unresolved political and economic differences led to WWII
  - **John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919):** Predicted the harsh terms of the treaty would hurt Germany's economy, and thus the economy of the rest of Europe, and lead to significant future political unrest.
    - When Hitler took control of Germany in 1933 and began its aggressive policies, Keynes' predictions seemed prophetic.

## Terms to Know

<p>Triple Alliance Russian-German Reinsurance Treaty "splendid isolation" Anglo-Japanese Alliance Entente Cordial Anglo-German arms race Triple Entente Bertha von Suttner, <i>Lay Down Your Arms</i> Dreadnoughts Kruger Telegram Algeciras Conference Second Moroccan Crisis, 1911 "sick man of Europe" Pan-Slavism Young Turks First Balkan Crisis (Bosnian Crisis) First Balkan War, 1912 Second Balkan War, 1913 "Third Balkan War" Archduke Franz Ferdinand Princip, "Black Hand" Kaiser Wilhelm II "blank check" Central Powers Allies Western Front Schlieffen Plan Battle of the Marne, 1914 trench warfare Battle of Verdun, 1916</p>	<p>Battle of the Somme, 1916 Erich Remarque, <i>All Quiet on the Western Front</i>, 1929 new weapons Eastern Front Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, 1917 Gallipoli campaign, 1915 T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) British naval blockade U-boats <i>Lusitania</i> unrestricted submarine warfare Archangel expedition, 1918 "Total war" Georges Clemenceau <i>Italia Irredenta</i> ("unredeemed Italy") Zimmerman Telegram Balfour Note, 1917 Woodrow Wilson Fourteen Points "self-determination" Meuse-Argonne offensive, 1918 Paris Peace Conference, 1919 Big Four Versailles Treaty Article 231 League of Nations John Maynard Keynes, <i>The Economic Consequences of the Peace</i>, 1919 Easter Rebellion, 1916</p>
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## **Essay Questions**

*Note: This sub-unit is a low-moderate probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 4 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are some practice questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams or may appear on future exams.*

1. Analyze major causes of World War I.
2. Analyze political, economic and military factors for the Allied victory in World War I.
3. Analyze ways in which World War I altered European society.
4. How was the balance of power changed as a result of World War I?

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